



Community Preservation Act Committee

Date: January 30, 2020

Time: 7:00pm

Location: Town Hall Annex Conference Room, 730 Mass Ave., Second Floor, Town Hall, Arlington, MA 02476

Minutes

In Attendance: Eric Helmuth,
Eugene Benson,
Pam Heidell,
Charlie McCabe,
JoAnn Robinson,
Clarissa Rowe,
Richard Murray and
Ann Woodward.

Not in Attendance: Leslie Mayer.

Also in Attendance: Jim Feeney.

1. Introduction: Chairperson Eric Helmuth opened the meeting at 7:00pm. Chairperson Helmuth introduced the format of the meeting, provided a brief overview of the CPAC application process, and requested that comments be limited to projects being presented at the meeting. Committee members introduced themselves to the audience.

2. Documentation of Historic Municipal Resources

Kelly Lynema, Senior Planner, introduced this application being presented on behalf of the Department of Planning and Community Development. Kelly noted Ali Carter was unavailable to present on the Community-wide Archaeological Survey as planned, but offered to present this application to the Committee following her presentation.

After reviewing progress to date on the prior CPA-funded documentation project funded, Kelly Lynema explained there has been a 30-year lapse in inventorying Town properties. The Town's Master Plan calls for this work to be completed. Following initial feedback provided by the Committee, as well as Steve Makowka, Kelly presented an increased number of properties for consideration. The 14 properties are located across Town. Kelly reviewed the project team, which would include consultants, expert in both buildings and landscapes, as well as the budget and timeline.

Clarissa Rowe recommended the project budget be reconsidered to ensure it is sufficient, and encouraged seeking quotes from consultants. Eric Helmuth reminded the Committee that this ongoing work demonstrates the value of CPA funds being used as seed money. Pam Heidell asked about seeking matching grants, and Eugene Benson questioned whether the timeline would change given the increased number of properties under consideration. JoAnn Robinson was pleased to see the project take a wider look at Arlington. JoAnn also reminded the Committee that Spy Pond field is being studied under a grant application from the last cycle.

Resident Jo Anne Preston offered information regarding a Native American trail in the Webcowet neighborhood, and wondered whether a marker could be installed to document this piece of important history. Jo Anne also offered that a marker should be considered for the reported slave graves at the Old Burying Ground. Clarissa Rowe noted that much research on our Native American history needs to be completed across Town, not just at Town-owned properties.

Resident Beth Melofchik appreciated the inclusion of landscapes in the proposal, and the continuity across Town.

3. Community-wide Archaeological Survey

Kelly Lynema provided an overview of the project, which aims to further understand the rich history that predates our current buildings and sites. This includes our Native American, farming, and mill industry history. The Department of Planning and Community Development has liaised with the State archaeologist and reviewed similar work conducted by other municipalities. After extensive research and mapping of various areas across Town, subterranean investigation will be considered to gather additional information. In addition to educational resources and support surrounding the findings, a possible outcome is the institution of protected districts.

Clarissa Rowe asked that Prince Hall Cemetery be included in the review, and consider opportunities for including school children in the process. Pam Heidell asked if the budget was adequate given the extensive scope of work. Kelly Lynema explained similar scopes of work were undertaken in Natick and North Attleborough.

Kate Potter, present on behalf of the Arlington Historical Society, wondered where any identified artifacts would end up. Kelly Lynema pointed out this would require further attention, but would be done in accordance with existing State recommendations and guidance.

Resident Beth Melofchik asked whether the MWRA water tower and park at Mt. Gilboa would be included. It was discussed that the water tower was not Town-owned. Beth understands there may have been a WWII installation at Mt. Gilboa given remnant metal stands, but the Committee was unable to confirm.

4. Historic Preservation of the Jason Russell House

George Parsons reviewed work completed to date via pictures, documenting the matching grant opportunities made available by prior CPA grants. George then reviewed the project budget, which includes: additional sill and foundation work, chimney repointing, releveling the cottage stoop, insulating water lines and electrical safety upgrades. As in prior years, the project will also include inspection and architectural oversight, as well as Historical Society staff time.

Clarissa Rowe asked about work completed to the 3rd floor window. George Parsons and Kate Potter recounted that during the course of work additional bullet holes were identified at this location. A Battle Field Archaeologist with the National Park Service helped to discern the evidence. Additional exploration may be conducted to understand further the circumstances surrounding this evidence.

Ann Woodward inquired about the status of any outstanding grant applications. George Parsons noted the most recent application was unsuccessful, likely because they did not have matching funds in hand yet. The Historical Society is considering reapplication in December 2020, but will also seek another State earmark.

5. Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden Restoration Planting

JoAnn Robinson and Robert Cuniff of the Friends of the Robbins Town Gardens presented the application. JoAnn Robinson reviewed the project goals, including the Olmsted archives, and outlined the locations of the proposed plantings. JoAnn discussed the process and timeline for the project, as well as the budget. The budget also includes a line for irrigation upgrades and repairs to ensure viability of the plantings. Robert Cuniff and Mona Mckindley, adviser to the Friends group, helped establish plant lists and estimate costs.

Robert Cuniff spoke to the benefits achieved by prior CPA grants. The CPA seed money has been a catalyst to gain momentum and interest in this gem in the center of Town. Robert discussed that light vandalism at the site continues to present a challenge, but volunteers assist with providing labor.

Charlie McCabe expanded on the need to fully document volunteer inputs for future grant applications. The State has a standard rate of valuing this labor at \$29 per hour. Clarissa Rowe has access to a spreadsheet that may help track volunteer hours.

Clarissa Rowe offered Select Horticulture and Bigelow Nurseries as great sources for hard-to-source plant material.

Resident Jo Anne Preston is happy to see additional trees get planted and reminded the Committee the new trees will need plenty of water. The applicants reviewed the watering protocol.

Resident Beth Melofchik suggested Garden in the Woods Nursery, Middlesex Conservation and Mass Audubon spring sales as local sources for plants.

6. Old Burying Ground Restoration Phase II

Jim Feeney presented on the status of Phase I work, and the objectives of Phase II work, which is a continuation of work on the perimeter wall. George Parsons, JoAnn Robinson, and Michele Hassler of the Cemetery Commission, were also in attendance as members of the project team. Jim displayed pictures of existing conditions and reviewed the overall approach to addressing priority areas of the perimeter wall. The project budget has been updated to account for inflation.

George Parsons discussed how the Old Burying Ground, a historic and cultural resource, is an important element of the Battle Road Scenic Byway. Kate Potter of the Arlington Historical Society reminded the audience of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the events leading to American Revolution, which could increase visitors to the site.

Clarissa Rowe encouraged raising project contingency to 25% given the age of the site, and would like to see Phase II work coordinated with any archaeological work.

Eugene Benson still believes the Verizon pole abutting the wall should be moved.

Eric Helmuth asked if additional phases are expected. Jim Feeney stated there would be one more application for work to the perimeter wall. The scope would likely be less involved, focusing primarily on repointing.

Resident Jo Anne Preston spoke about an article she is writing about slave graves at this site. Jo Anne informed the Committee that an Arlington High School student has been working on a project about this area where British soldiers are also believed to be buried.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Clarissa Rowe, seconded by Ann Woodward. The vote was unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56pm